

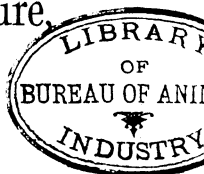
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# United States Department of Agriculture

BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY—Circular No. 82.

A. D. MELVIN, D. V. S., Chief of Bureau.



WASHINGTON, D. C., *December 5, 1905.*

SIR: The following article on "Hints to Poultry Raisers," by G. Arthur Bell, Assistant Animal Husbandman, is prepared with the special end in view of furthering the purpose of this Bureau to give the raisers of poultry, especially the general farmer, the best information possible in concise form, and I therefore recommend that the article be published as a circular of this Bureau.

Respectfully,

A. D. MELVIN,  
*Chief of Bureau.*

Hon. JAMES WILSON,  
*Secretary of Agriculture.*

## HINTS TO POULTRY RAISERS.

By G. ARTHUR BELL,  
*Assistant Animal Husbandman, Bureau of Animal Industry.*

### SELECTION OF A VARIETY.

Purebreds are desirable, as with these one has a flock of fowls which will produce carcasses and eggs of a much more uniform shape, color, and size than mongrels will produce, all of which will aid in finding a ready sale. If one already has a flock of mongrel fowls and can not afford to buy purebreds, he should choose a purebred male bird of the breed preferred and mate him with a few of the best mongrel females. This system, if carefully followed for a few years, will give a high-grade flock that will be practically as good as purebreds, so far as market conditions for dressed fowls and eggs are concerned.

Choice of a variety will depend largely on the purpose for which the fowls are kept—whether eggs alone, both eggs and meat, or meat alone is the chief object; whether white-shelled or brown-shelled eggs are desired; and whether sitters or nonsitters are wanted.

*Egg breeds.*—Nonsitters and producers of white-shelled eggs—Leghorns and Minorcas.

*General-purpose breeds.*—Sitters and producers of brown-shelled eggs—Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, Orpingtons, and Rhode Island Reds.

*Meat breeds.*—Sitters and producers of brown-shelled eggs—Brahmas, Cochins, and Langshans.

## HOUSES.

*Location.*—Select an elevation having a natural drainage away from the building. A dry, porous soil, such as a sandy or gravelly loam, is preferable to a clay soil.

*Exposure.*—As sunlight and warmth are essential to the best success with poultry, the buildings should face the south. A southeastern exposure is preferable to a southwestern one if a direct southern exposure can not be obtained.

*Size of house.*—The size of the house will depend almost entirely on the number of birds to be kept. If the birds are kept in flocks of forty to sixty, about 5 square feet of floor space should be allotted to each hen. The building should be high enough to enable the attendant to avoid bumping his head against the ceiling.

## A HOUSE FOR FIFTY TO SIXTY FOWLS.

The best house for fifty to sixty fowls is 20 by 14 feet; front elevation  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet, back elevation  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet, with double pitch roof of unequal span. The roof, if it is shingled, should have not less than one-third pitch. If roofing paper is used, one-quarter pitch will answer. In the front, or south, wall there should be placed two windows about 1 foot from the top and 3 feet from the ends; 8 by 10 inches is a good-sized pane to use in a twelve-light sash, making the sash about 3 feet 9 inches high, and 2 feet 5 inches wide. A door  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by 6 feet may be made in one of the end walls, and also a small door in the front wall, for the fowls to pass in and out of the building.

## INTERNAL ARRANGEMENT.

The roost platform should be placed in the rear of the house, extending the whole length. The platform should be about 3 feet wide and 3 feet from the floor, and the perches be placed about 8 or 10 inches above the platform. The nests should be placed against the end of the house opposite the door or under the roost platform, and should be darkened. Several small boxes for shell, grit, beef scraps, etc., should be placed against the walls about 16 inches above the floor. If cement or wood floors are used, a dust bath should be provided for the fowls.

## THE FEEDING OF HENS.

In order to obtain eggs, it is necessary to have healthy, vigorous stock, properly fed. In order to do their best, hens should be fed grain food, animal food, and green food. They should be fed enough to keep them in good condition but not overfat, and they should be induced to take plenty of exercise. No set rules can be given for feeding, as conditions vary, and there are different methods of feeding different breeds.

A good system to follow for winter feeding is mash once a day and grain scattered in the litter twice a day. The mash may be fed dry or slightly moistened. When fed dry, it is usually put into a trough or hopper hung against the wall and the fowls allowed access to it at all times.

The mash fed at the Maine Experiment Station is as follows, in the proportions indicated:

- 200 pounds wheat bran.
- 100 pounds corn meal.
- 100 pounds wheat middlings.
- 100 pounds linseed meal.
- 100 pounds gluten meal.
- 100 pounds beef scrap.

Another mash may be mixed as follows, in the proportions indicated:

- 100 pounds corn meal.
- 100 pounds ground oats.
- 100 pounds wheat bran.

#### THE FEEDING OF YOUNG CHICKENS.

Young chickens should be fed a little at a time and often. If they are given ground food alone, there is great danger of overfeeding. Very good results may be obtained by the feeding entirely of cracked grains from the time the chickens are hatched until they reach maturity. There are on the market many prepared chick feeds, consisting of different mixtures of cracked grains, which are very suitable. After the chickens are five or six weeks old, the prepared chick feed may be dropped and the chickens fed on cracked corn, cracked wheat, hulled oats, etc.

If the chickens can not get grass, some kind of green feed should be provided. Lettuce and cabbage are very good for this purpose. Some kind of meat should be provided, such as green cut bone or meat scraps. Finely cracked grit should be kept in a box where the chickens can help themselves at all times. Water should be provided from the start, and should be placed in such a dish that the chickens can not get into it and get wet.